1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Selya, Ntabgrode

mourners sat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imisala*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilewawwo*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukugela imigela*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home of the deceased is taboo (*musiko*), for hammering bark-cloth is a symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Selga, Ha Ngonde.

If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*anyago*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwaihojo, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukunduula*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 19). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwana*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukuingesia*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Lituluke, lituluke,
Tuluke mumilapula.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akayunguti kambapila
Palili po pakuko kwanga.
The *yunguti* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abaana*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyobwe (a senior wife of Mwaihojo who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyobwe's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that chiefs alone washed with two wives, commoners with one only. Others insisted that commoners also washed with two.

[2] I.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Safpa, Ma Ngonde

881 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana
534 leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyabwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[531] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukusendulula*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingesia* and some for the *ukusendulula*.'

513 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and
535 other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukulima*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukulanya ngonye*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's [574] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 Six weeks after the *ukwingesia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied
537 by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukusendulula*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Saip, Mulungoude

at the groom's home (*ukwakwala*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meanwhile the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusenya ulufunde*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufunde*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibalega* ritual which follows.

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Salga, Mallyonde

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief's wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwimpala* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukwisbela*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*inyembe*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafiga*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ha Ngonde

881 585 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'. 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 881.5 1897 745 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 585 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his contemporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

● 431 To give presents (*ukukomela*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 585 602 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as her father-in-law (*ukukamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

585 881 [77] ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is anointed with red ointment, shares the mash of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Porokoto's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

585 881 ●431 Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the people of her home village (*ukugwa*), her father making the first gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ijamapa*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyatile, Kyatile, Kyatipwe

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

585 881 783 When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibuko*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhœa.' 'When they take the food

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the boys form a queue and bend forward, holding out their hands while she poured water over the hands of each of them. After washing, each took a mouthful of water and spat it out. They were warned not to spill it on their legs as they washed and spat. Some young men washed with the boys, and women watching shouted advice, but a number of the boys went off without taking a mouthful of water or without spitting. After the boys came the girls, and then the women and babies and some more small boys who had arrived late. We counted twenty-six boys and young men, twenty-six girls and babies, and twenty-four women washing.

Then came the splashing of legs. The doctor shredded a banana sucker to make a tail. All the company gathered round the boiling pot of medicine, and the doctor, dipping the tail into the pot, splashed the boiling liquid on to their legs. Children screamed; women hopped with the pain, but shouted to their children to come and be treated. Frightened small children were hauled back by men, women, and elder children—a full sister of the twins, about 9 years old, was dragged in yelling. Mothers were especially careful to see that their babies were splashed, and pulled up the cloths binding them to their backs, so that their legs might be exposed. Mwakobela and his brother came to be splashed but some of the young men hurried away immediately after washing, disregarding the women who shouted to them that it was taboo for them to leave before they had been splashed. The women took the whole ritual much more seriously than the men, and they were very particular to see that their children were treated. One old woman who had helped a child to wash, holding its hands, came back again to wash herself. The doctor and other women shouted that she had already washed. She replied: 'Oh, I just helped the child. Have I really finished?' The mother and remaining twin did not stir from the hut—she looked dirty and dishevelled. The doctor was elegant; she wore five brass body-rings and her body was well oiled and rouged. She organized everyone with great confidence and was treated with respect, a mat being spread for her to sit upon (no other woman had a mat), and her assistant fetching and carrying everything she required.

Many of the women relatives had brought gifts of millet and after the treatment was over they tipped their small basketfuls into a big grain basket. Then they had a snack of roasted plantains (Mwakobela provided three stems) and went home.

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on their return home, but the general effect of modern conditions is that the solidarity of the kinship group expressed in gatherings at rituals is weakened. These changes will be discussed at length in the volume on the communal rituals after the differences between the pagan and Christian conceptions of God have been analysed.

(*c*) *The exchange of gifts*

All the family rituals are occasions for the exchange of gifts which pass primarily between lineages linked by marriage. The exchanges at different rituals are connected, and acceptance of a gift at a marriage may necessitate a return gift at a funeral. Thus the groom gives cattle for his bride at the marriage and at a funeral sons-in-law and fathers-in-law must bring cattle to kill so that they may accompany the deceased, and these are counted among the marriage-cattle given or returned. They may be kept and not killed if there are sufficient cattle to kill otherwise, but they must be offered. The obligation of affines to 'bury one another' by providing cattle for each other's funerals is even mentioned in the marriage negotiations. If a bride is not sent to replace a dead woman, marriage-cattle must be returned by her father, or at least one beast representing 'a mother to draw water for you'. So strong is the feeling that acceptance of a gift implies the obligation to make a return, that cattle offered for a marriage or funeral feast may be refused, on the ground that the family concerned do not wish to commit themselves to returning them. Angombwike described how he sweated and could eat little of a very lavish marriage feast, at which he acted as the groom's 'go-between', for he was wondering how he could make adequate return (cf. p. 253).

The greatest gifts are cattle; but fowls, cloth, beer, curds, bananas, pots, mats, firewood, ointment, cooked food and, nowadays, cash play a subsidiary part. At a funeral affines of the dead man who have no cattle, affines of the 'owner of the funeral', and close friends bring cloths. After the consummation of a marriage, or the inheritance of a widow, the new husband must give his wife a fowl, or meat, or cash representing a fowl, to take to her parents, and when she bears a child he sends another fowl. The wife's people, for their part, bring beer, ointment, firewood, mats, pots, and bananas when they take a bride or young mother back to her husband. There are also three or four exchanges of feasts

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431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty–marriage ritual.

431 613 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 621 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange

431 602 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 602 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

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pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers.

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband.

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him.

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his

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neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

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find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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577 777 556 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusajo*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bammwemelege, bansajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*nkali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

● 431 775 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ngolofu*) shade.'

754 673 621 Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives, living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 621 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after another that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds, not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

After harvest comes the house-building; and when that is finished the men are free to go out to seek work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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845 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of
783 truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

844 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family
846 place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

851 But in about a week she goes to show the child to
603 her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which
●431 lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her father's house with a train of friends carrying food, and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays:

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Next, the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned.

Lingering here and there in certain families are strange customs, probably belated survivals from

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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The most important reason which traditionally impelled men to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas was, so the old men told me, the frequent lack of affection and generosity in women towards their married step-children. If one of his wives had died or left him, then a man might find that his children by her, when they came to visit him, received but scanty entertainment from his other wives and went away home empty-handed. So to obviate this state of affairs he would set aside *busongo* plots and bananas, and take food and gifts for these motherless children thence. In the old days married children nearly always lived within a mile or two of their father's house and visits were frequent. Nowadays this reason, which still continues to operate, tends to be overshadowed by the desire on the man's part to have a definite portion of the crop marked out for sale to the Indian traders. Nevertheless many men prefer community of property to an anti-harvest contract with their wives and so do not keep any *busongo* plots at all.

"What," I asked an elderly man in Selya, "is a *busongo* plot?" "The word *busongo*, used either of bananas or of garden plots, means that they belong only to me, not to my wives; so that when my daughter comes I cut for her a banana bunch of my own and give her my own food. Not all men keep *busongo* plots; some like the customs but others do not. I myself have only one wife and no *busongo* plots, all my bananas are hers and all my gardens too."

And another elderly man, also of Selya, said to me one day: "Some men like to have *busongo* plots, others do not. Nowadays these plots are used to grow crops for sale, but in the old days they were for feeding a man's children. I myself divide up all my gardens amongst my wives (he has three living with him at present). Even though three of my wives have died and one has left me, even so I do not keep a *busongo* plot; when my children come to visit me they are given food by Jane (his chief wife, who is also his favourite). At first I divided up the children (i.e. the grown-up children whose mothers had either died or left him, and who in consequence had no special claim on any one of his present wives) assigning some to one, some to another of my wives, but the others grudged them food so now they all come to Jane." He here suggests that the meanness of two of his wives and the existence of many motherless children gave him good reason to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas, but he did not do so, he preferred to rely on the generosity of his favourite wife.

And besides providing entertainment for adult but motherless children, besides providing a definite portion of the crop for the husband to sell, *busongo* plots and bananas are also useful, as we have seen, to meet the demands of the chief and to secure the household against a shortage of food.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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166 425 In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

166 425 622 624 621 Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great-commoner, not by the chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible ; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwe great-commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger : " First the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great-commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place ; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according [431] to the old custom, would say ' Good ! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases ; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." " Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot ? " I enquired. " No, not the chief ; does he know the details of our land-rights ? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." " Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land ? " " No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief ; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself ? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great-commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwe chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief: " The stranger goes first to the great-commoner

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which piece to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger."

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It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish."

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In giving garden-land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can hoe where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet-potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tusekelege," I was told, "came to the village of Ibungila (in Kukwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize-garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Masoko. They told Tusekelege that he could hoe only the same extent of ground

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so the increment that accrued to them was also greater than usual. And thus they normally had more cattle than ordinary men.

Some of these extra cattle they expended in marrying more wives of their own, who bore them more children. The girl children later brought in more marriage-cattle, and meanwhile the wives and unmarried children worked in the fields and so enabled the rulers to entertain more often and more lavishly than their less married subjects. And it was by lavish entertainment above all that the prestige of a ruler was maintained.

(b) *THE EXPENDITURE OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

All important guests at Mbande, whether traders or subordinates, were, as we have seen, entertained at the Kyungu's expense. Now the entertainment of guests and subordinates is a quite indispensable function of every primitive political authority; power and prestige cannot possibly be maintained without it. Its importance in primitive constitutions has recently been pointed out by Richards in a paper[1] on the constitution of the Bemba tribe in Northern Rhodesia; and the facts of Ngonde tradition bear out her conclusions. Chiefs and nobles were given food and beer when they visited Mbande and the position of Mbande could not otherwise have been maintained. And the Kyungu, like the Citimukulu of the Bemba, also gave to his subordinates gifts of more permanent value.

Cloths were given both to chiefs and nobles. We remember that the very first Kyungu at Mbande is said to "have given headcloths to the indigenous rulers" who, in accepting them, accepted also his overlordship; and from that time onwards the practice continued. Whenever a territorial noble died the nobles of Ngonde came from the Kyungu and formally presented his successor with a dark headcloth, which he then wore turban-fashion as a symbol of his status. And other gifts of cloths were made to them also, from time to time. The nobles of Ngonde likewise were formally presented with dark headcloths on succession and, as we have seen, got gifts of cloth each time the traders came.

And the custom grew up in the middle period of giving cloths to the chiefs also, the sons of the Kyungu. When the chiefs heard that the Kyungu had been buying cloths they used to come, each alone with one man, and be given some. Our evidence does not make clear whether

[1] Audrey Richards "Tribal Government in Transition." Supplement to *J.R.A.S.* Oct. 1935.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

652 this was done by all chiefs or only by the great chiefs; but it is certain
431 that the great chiefs possessed more of these cloths than their juniors.

652 But perhaps the most important traditional use of cloth by the
431 Kyungus was for funeral gifts.[1] The social significance of funeral
764 ceremonial in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa is hard to exaggerate;[2] for both the economic and the emotional aspects not only of kinship but also of village and political relationships are given formal expression most frequently at funerals. And a gift at a funeral carries greater weight than one on any other occasion.

652 Then, again, chiefs and nobles who brought food to Mbande
431 were often given either a beast or a woman slave in return. "When
567 one of the chiefs had caught a great many fish . . . . . he would
583 gather his men and go to Mbande . . . . . Then the Kyungu would tell one of the nobles of Ngonde to go and fetch a beast or, if no beast were available—and cattle were scarce in the old days—he would give him a woman. And if the chief liked her he would take her in marriage and she would become his lady,[3] but if he did not, then he would take her to his own country and sell her there for a cow." (We expressed some surprise at the rate of exchange.) "Yes, truly, for one cow only, cows were very scarce in those days." And sometimes, in order to make sure he would like her, the visiting chief would be allowed to choose his own girl. "When one of his sons came to visit him the Kyungu would sometimes give orders that he should be shown all the (slave) girls and choose the one he liked best; and so the chief would choose a local girl[4] and marry her. And he could never then sell her, once he had chosen her in love."

Now the gift of a woman slave had many social implications. If she was taken to wife the recipient regarded the Kyungu thereafter as his father-in-law, as well as his "father." She herself became free and her children spoke of the Kyungu as their grandfather. And these gifts did more than any others to strengthen the bonds of kinship between the Kyungu and his subordinate chiefs.

652 To his common subjects also, if they had deserved well of him, the
431 Kyungu would occasionally give either cloths or a woman or a cow; and the great chiefs of Ngonde likewise and even ordinary chiefs and nobles did the same. And these subordinate authorities, as we have seen, also used to entertain their own subjects generously with food

[1] *Vide infra* section 7.
[2] Cf. Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial." *Bantu Studies*, March 1939.
[3] I use "lady" here to translate "*mwehe*" which is the title of honour used for a chief's wife; the implication is that she then ceased to be a slave.
[4] Slaves were of two kinds, the relatives of criminals and war captives (*vide infra* sections 5 and 6). It was apparently customary to choose one of the first kind on such occasions.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FNi7

and beer; their position depended upon doing so. Up and down the hierarchy the stream of wealth travelled and this stream, in its ebb and flow, was the lifeblood of the old constitution.

(c) *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IVORY TRADE.*

Now it was the scarce and valuable cloths derived from the ivory trade which enabled Mbande to bind the subordinate chiefs and nobles to it in secular matters. Lubaga, lacking this wealth, had no such secular power. But it is very easy to exaggerate the secular power which Mbande had. Personal loyalty to the Kyungu and the great chiefs was enforced throughout Ngonde,[1] the nobles of Ngonde participated in the selection of territorial nobles and great chiefs,[2] tribal war was organized from Mbande,[3] but that was all. In everyday life the sovereignty of the local rulers was scarcely limited. Civil war was endemic in Ngonde,[4] and secular justice had no central organization[5].

The central power of Mbande rested on the combination of divine kingship with wealth derived from the ivory-trade. But both in religious and economic matters there was a very high degree of local autonomy. We have already discussed the local autonomy in religion[6] and must now discuss it in the economic sphere.

The economic relations of men in the middle period of Ngonde's history were largely confined to the little local groups of chiefdom and fief. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family, with the assistance of village neighbours and of a few friends and relatives who normally lived in the same chiefdom or fief. Marriage, with all the exchanges of cattle and food which marriage involved, was usually a local matter also; men only occasionally went beyond the chiefdom or the fief for their wives; while of the few specialised craftmen, such as smiths, a representative was usually to be found in each such local group. Economic links between the local groups existed: men moved from one chiefdom or fief to another leaving relatives behind, some marriages took place across the local boundaries, famous craftmen or doctors attracted clients from far afield. But these links were far fewer in number than those which obtained between the members of each separate local group.

And the ivory trade added little to the economic links between the local groups. It involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, or anything of the kind; it touched the common people only slightly. Commoners and chiefs however did occasionally exchange tusks either

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[1] *Vide infra* 5 (a)
[2] *Vide infra* 5 (b)
[3] *Vide infra* 6 (b)
[4] *Vide infra* 6 (a)
[5] *Vide infra* 5 (c)
[6] *Vide supra* 3

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Burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber! —Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwenende![2]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpolombasambo![2]—Great Father! Great Father! —Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was

[1] Names of early Kyungus.
[2] Archic words which I do not understand.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 602 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of Ngonde.

602 764 431 And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,[1] in particular, whether of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political hierarchy.

764 431 [763] On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.[2] In the case of a prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done. The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral, bringing gifts of food.[3]

8. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED* (1875-1937)

000 We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

[1] This account excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.
[2] This was certainly so in the chiefdoms, evidence for the fiefs is here lacking.
[3] *Vide* Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 431 643 The present Kyungu maintains his position by a continual distribution of material gifts, as the Kyungus did in the past, but many of the details of this distribution are now altered. Besides the cattle which he now gives the great chiefs he also gives away far more funeral gifts than his predecessors. But on the other hand, the traditional distribution of cloth and ivory, after a visit from the ivory traders, and of slaves and cattle to those who brought tribute in food has now ceased. The traditional procedure of giving a newly elected noble a cloth still continues.

178 431 643 764 Previous Kyungus only sent cloths to the funerals of the most important of their subjects—chiefs, nobles, great-commoners and a few others. But Peter sends a cloth to nearly every funeral in his own half of the Ngonde plain ; though in Kilupula's half and in the hills he only sends cloths to the funerals of chiefs and nobles.

Nearly every family in his own half of the plain now sends a hen (worth 3d.) to Peter to announce a death and he returns a cloth (worth 2s, 3s. or 4s.) as a funeral gift. More important families (chiefs or rich great-commoners) from all over Ngonde send a bull-calf (worth maybe 7s. or 8s.) and to them he returns a cloth or blanket worth anything from 8s. to 12s. In 1934, a year with many deaths, he spent £57 on such funeral gifts and he can hardly have received more than a tenth of that value in hens and calves.

It is this custom above all which gives Peter the status of a paramount chief (as opposed to a subordinate official of the British Administration) in the Ngonde of to-day. And it is only his private fortune which makes it possible. The profits of the *milasa* never reach any such proportions, while, if he spent his official salary on funeral gifts, he would be quite unable to clothe himself, his wives and children.

Now the extension by Peter of the custom of sending cloths to funerals is significant both in relation to the new legal situation and to the present poverty of the other rulers of Ngonde. In his own portion of the plain Peter is the only Native judicial authority who can execute judgments, he is also the only Native ruler who can afford to keep up, on any large scale, the bountiful activities traditionally associated with chieftainship. And he has thus largely replaced the local rulers and the great chiefs, in relation to the common people, both as judge and as plutocrat.

Though we made no intensive study of the areas of the "Sub-chiefs," it is clear that they are not in a position to give any valuable gifts to their people, and that their prestige is in consequence far lower in their own areas than is the Kyungu's in his ; they are but subordinate magistrates with traditional affiliations. Moreover the Kyungu, both through his appeal court and through the sending of funeral gifts to chiefs and nobles is still able to maintain his paramount position in their areas.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of casava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ikombe area, an isolated peninsular south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 3,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulars and in tiny lakeside basins further south along the Lake shore. They are widely famed as potters, and they exchange their wares for cereal foods to augment their fishing.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

1. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief *(omalafyale)*[3] of the village and

The chief Wwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukubonola*, handing over the gift.

2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(agaju)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 283; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. *Wilson*, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *ulifumu (olifumu)* by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

765 48| head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This ceremony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 [302 515] Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (*ukumwa inwili*, to shave the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be the last act ending mourning.

[291 516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 123 43| In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood (*Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the ceremony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[21] *ukwega:* to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwegia:* nuptials.